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The Newsletter of the Newfoundland Historic Trust

June 2000

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Newman Wine Vaults Update

After a long wait, the restoration work on the historic Newman Wine Vaults on Water Street, St. John's, is back underway. Together, the Department of Culture, Tourism and Recreation and the Department of Works, Services and Transportation have committed to spend \$50,000 on the project.

Work currently being carried out in the vaults includes the rewiring of the structure, the placement of new lights and electrical outlets, the construction of washrooms, and the installation of a new concrete floor in the outer warehouse section of the vaults.

All of this is good news to the Newfoundland Historic Trust, which plans to have the Vaults open to the general public for July and August of this year. It has been the goal of the Trust to open the Vaults as an interpretation centre to relate the history of the wine trade here in Newfoundland, and it seems as if this goal is close to becoming a reality.

The Vaults were constructed in the very early part of the nineteenth century to age the Newman's Celebrated Port. They were used as a bonded warehouse up until 1966, and were designated as a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation in May 1997.

Inspector General's house to be demolished

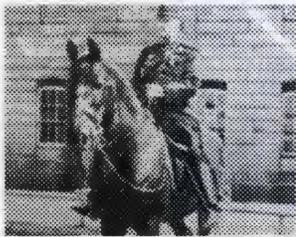
On December 13, 1999, the \$40 million initiative known as "The Rooms" was officially unveiled, which will provide much needed space for the Newfoundland Museum, the Art Gallery and the Provincial Archives.

"With this project we are renewing our commitment to preserving and promoting our cultural heritage, a heritage unlike any other in the world and one of which we are all justly proud" said Premier Tobin in a news release issued the same day. Sadly, this commitment to preserving our heritage will mean the demolition of several buildings, including the historic Inspector General's House at 1 Harvey Road.

The building at 1 Harvey Road was constructed in 1895 and fully in use by 1897. It was built just outside the southern boundary of Fort Townsend. The first occupant and original owner of 1 Harvey Road was John Roche McCowen, (1844-1908) policeman and administrator. Born Kilrush, County Clare, Ireland, McCowen served three years in the British Army and nine years in the Royal Irish Constabulary before coming to Newfoundland.



Inspector General's House, 1 Harvey Rd.



McCowen came to St. John's in October 1871 to join the Terra Nova Constabulary. This force had been organized to replace the British garrison which had left Newfoundland in 1870. McCowen served seven years

with the Constabulary, and was recognized five times for "special and meritorious services". In 1895 McCowen was appointed Inspector-General of the Newfoundland Constabulary. By 1905, he was the Inspector-General of a force which numbered 89 members, a capacity in which he was responsible for modernizing not only the Constabulary, but also the St. John's fire department. He died in Montreal on February 8, 1908, while being treated for pleuro-pneumonia.

It is presumably at this point that ownership of 1 Harvey Road switched to the government, though it was still occupied by the Inspector General. After McCowen, this was John J. Sullivan (1846-1918) who was born Trinity, son of Florence and Annie (Handlon) Sullivan. After McCowen's death in 1908 Sullivan became acting Inspector General, and the next year was confirmed in the post. He was the first native-born head of the constabulary and a recipient of the Imperial Service Order and the King's Police Medal. Sullivan retired in 1917 and died a year later.

Charles H. Hutchings, KC succeeded Sullivan as Inspector General, and both the 1928 and 1932 city directories list 1 Harvey Road as his residence. Hutchings served as Chief of Police from 1917 to 1934, when he retired. The building housed the offices of the Police Superintendent until 1935, when it became the District Superintendent's office under Patrick J. O'Neill. He served as Chief of Police until 1944, and died December 6th, 1944.

The next family to live in the house was that of Llewellyn Strange, who served as Chief of Police from 1944 to 1950. He moved into the house October 24th, 1945, and lived there with his wife Mary Ellen Strange (nee Morgan), their daughters Daisy and Jane, and their son Gordon.

The residence was occupied by Strange and family up until 1952; at that time it was occupied by the Department of Economic Development under Alfred Valdmanis and also housed the Premier's office under Joseph Smallwood. When the new Confederation Building was opened in July, 1960, those offices moved to the new building. By 1965, the occupant of the building was the Traffic Court. Around 1984, the building was taken over by the Estates Division of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and was still used for that purpose as of May 2000.

Baccalieu Trail Heritage Inventory

In January 1999, the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Corporation undertook a project to record the heritage structures of the region. The cutoff date was set at 1920, with the exception of those with unique architectural design and/or significance. All communities of the Baccalieu Trail have now been documented, totalling 1576 structures - houses, community buildings, cellars and other outbuildings, as well as those related to the traditional fishery.

Over the last 15 months, a number of buildings recorded have been taken down, making the inventory the only remaining record of their existence. The creators of the inventory - Rowena Smith, Deborah Hollett, Linda Reid and Terry Maddox - noticed an increased awareness and interest among residents about their built heritage, resulting in requests for heritage designation applications from the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

One copy of each community's built heritage inventory will be made available to that community; the Corporation will retain the inventory on computer and a copy will be sent to the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, to become part of the provincial inventory of heritage structures.

Parsons' House, Harbour Grace, Demolished

In mid May of this year, one of the oldest houses in Harbour Grace was pulled down, the Parsons' House in Bear's Cove. On the basis of the information Shane O'Dea was able to gather from oral sources (The Webbers and Bill Parsons) and on his knowledge of the building patterns, he had dated it to the mid 1820s.



Parsons' House, just before demolition

The house was a two storey wooden structure under a gable roof. In its northern end (on your right as you faced the facade) there was a settle fireplace behind which, in a linhay, was a brick-arched cellar. There were various additions to the back of the house. Bill Parsons (the last inhabitant) believed that his ancestor may have built the Webber House which stood on Woodville Rd behind the Convent. He thought that many of the tools might have been out in the barn behind the house.

The Parsons' house was of a type O'Dea calls the Planter House, as it represents the first wave of permanent building by people in Newfoundland. While permanent structures had been built before the Judicature Act of 1824, that act meant that people could buy and sell property with a greater security.

In 1975 about eighteen houses of similar form in Conception Bay (7 in Harbour Grace, 3 in Carbonear, 1 in Bristol's Hope, 2 in Upper Island Cove, 1 in Cupids, 4 in Brigus) were recorded as still surviving. These buildings were generally timber-frame (occasionally full-studded) construction, two storeys under a gable roof; one room deep with later lindhays creating the characteristic saltbox profile (if only for part of the rear wall); having a gable end settle fireplace in the kitchen and, sometimes, a parlour bedroom above the kitchen. The facades were Georgian in character but not consistently Georgian in that they were not always symmetrical. Classical trim features - in doorways, fireplaces and staircases - were common throughout. Of these only eight now remain.

IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE HALDEN EARLE

Former President of the Newfoundland Historic Trust, passed away May 10th, 2000. An Anglican priest as well as a noted story-teller and man of grand humour, George Earle was born in Change Islands in 1914. Serving - and studying at Durham University - in England during and after the Second World War, George returned to Newfoundland to become Principal of Queen's College in 1957. In 1965 he was made Provost of the College, a post he held until his retirement in 1979. At his funeral in the Cathedral, Bishop Donald Harvey, who was one of his students, made clear that George Earle could never be recollected without laughter, and without warmth.

Association of Heritage Industries

In October of last year, a co-operative effort of several heritage organizations including the Newfoundland Historic Trust, brought together 150 representatives of heritage organizations across the province to discuss mutual concerns.

As a result of the day long discussion, a Steering Committee was formed of heritage volunteers from all parts of the province and the directors of the provincial heritage organizations, and given a mandate to follow up some of the matters identified by the heritage community. The mandate is multi-faceted and focuses on

- a) setting the ground work to develop a provincial heritage policy through a needs assessment and economic benefits analysis,
- b) promoting history and heritage to all levels of government and other institutions,
- c) developing links with heritage groups, the private sector and government and
- d) review the necessary steps to establish a permanent Association of Heritage Industries.

Since October, the Steering Committee has acquired funding through the Federal/Provincial Labour Market Development Agreement. An office has been opened and a co-ordinator hired. It has also taken steps towards conducting the needs assessment this summer, in preparation for a second fall conference in October. At that time, the delegates will review the Steering Committee's work and determine the future of the association.

As part of the process of developing recommendations for a provincial heritage policy, the Steering Committee is particularly interested in the viewpoints of all those concerned with heritage and its development.

Should you wish to contribute any remarks or suggestions on heritage policy or related issues, please contact Peter Latta, Co-ordinator of the Association of Heritage Industries, at 709/738-4345 (fax 738-4346) e-mail ahi@nf.aibn.com. Submissions, in any format, are welcome until the end of June 2000.

Five Buildings Awarded Heritage Designation

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has designated another five buildings as Registered Heritage Structures. These include three churches, a private home and a bed and breakfast. The buildings, situated in St. John's, St. George's, Brooklyn and Placentia, were designated as heritage structures at a meeting of the Heritage Foundation's board of directors on March 25, 2000.

The first of the churches designated by the Foundation was in Placentia - St. Luke's Anglican Church. St. Luke's Anglican Church, constructed 1906 in a wooden Gothic Revival style, was designated not only because of its architectural merits, but also due to the importance it holds in the regional social and historical context and the depth of history associated with its grounds, cemetery and related church artefacts. A very different style of church was designated in St. John's. George Street Church, built in 1873, is now the oldest surviving Methodist church in St. John's. The church, built in a simplified Gothic Revival style, was designated for the quality of design it represents, its beautifully executed interior woodwork, and the important place it holds in the religious history of the provincial capital.

Also designated in St. John's was the building known as Angel House located at 146 Hamilton Avenue. This is one of very few of the style remaining in St. John's with five sided Scotch dormers, built by one of the leading industrialists of his day, James Angel of the United Nail and Foundry. Of particular note and included in the designation of the structure are the grounds and gardens with their ornamental iron fencing.

The third church designated by the Foundation was St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in St. George's. St. Joseph's, built 1898-1904 was possibly designed by Bishop Neil McNeil who went on to become Archbishop of Toronto. It is noteworthy for its fine classically inspired exterior detail, notably the cast iron work on the pilaster capitals, its well executed unpainted wooden interior and for its working exterior clock.

The only private dwelling designated in the set of buildings was from Brooklyn, known as the Archibald Bennett House. The building was constructed as a private home in 1890 by Archibald Bennett, a carpenter by trade. The house has a steep gable roof with a rounded top, a fairly unusual feature in the area. Still owned by the Bennett family, the house was designated as a unique example of regional vernacular design.

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Membership Form

Fees are \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$35 for groups, institutions and organizations. Please clip and complete the following form and mail with cheque for membership payable to "The Newfoundland Historic Trust" to The Newfoundland Historic Trust, PO Box 2403, St. John's, NF A1C 6E7

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ Fax: _____